

John Sharkey,
Executive Vice President,
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Dear Mr Sharkey,

I am sending this letter following your request to summarise the counter terrorism practices across the national arenas leading up to and at the time of the Manchester Arena bombing.

The National Arenas Association is a body that represents 23 of the largest indoor Arenas throughout the U.K. and Ireland. I would add that whilst there are common practices across the arenas, not all undertake the same measures and with security, each venue will undertake its own risk assessment as detailed below.

Please find below a summary of the considerations that were in place at and around May 2017:

Risk assessments of each event

As part of the planning process for events, arenas undertake the following research so that a security strategy could be developed by the venue:

- the anticipated attendance
- the artist(s), performer and participant profiles
- the audience profile
- previous experience of the artist and audience profile
- VIP and guest details

The relevant teams in each arena would carry out a risk assessment of the event identifying any number of hazards that an event can present such as alcohol, drugs, weapons, bootlegging, ticket touts, age range. This was gained from advice and evidence of experience and references from similar events of other venues and police led intelligence concerning the current national threat level, performance and the audience demographic. Where necessary this assessment may extend to include engaging with an arena's CTSA and wider security agencies. Risk levels could vary greatly, as they can today.

From this set of information the appropriate levels of response are determined and actions to mitigate these risks and develop an appropriate plan or process can be developed to eliminate or reduce the risk.

On occasions, it may be necessary for Arenas to liaise with the police or appropriate intelligence agency due to specific intelligence or through the risk assessment process, it may be deemed that the level of risk requires police liaison. If an event required escalation and engagement with the police and/or security services, the mitigation plans would be reviewed regularly to see if any element of the plan required updating.

Across arenas, a multi-layered approach to security is taken which can include the following:

- Effective control of access for both pedestrians and vehicles.
- Monitoring systems and security technology including CCTV.
- Maintaining a visible presence with high-profile patrols on foot and mobile.
- Deployment of physical security presence.
- The use of intervention, bag searches /search and detection dogs.
- Hostile Vehicle Mitigation Counter measures at points of higher risk including main entrances.

Arenas also proactively participated in the Protective Security Improvement Plan (PSIA), which is reviewed on a quarterly basis. It has continuously improved in line with the action plan created by the CTSA.

Whilst there were terrorist incidents in Paris and Brussels before the Manchester Arena bombing, the national security threat level was 'Severe' from 2014 to 2017, therefore Arenas security plans and measures were reviewed and implemented based on the increased threat level. In response to the Paris and Brussels incidents, Arenas security measures were reviewed in response to the attacks with some measures increased for a period of time after the attacks and other measures maintained as increased standard procedures. The range of measures considered by Arenas during this period, included any to all of the following:

- Increased visibility of security staff in public areas
- Full bag searches on entry to the arenas.
- Body searches of customers.
- Deployment of search wands to detect concealed items.
- Increase number of security staff inside and outside the venue.
- Extended perimeters with various measures / barriers in place to prevent prohibited vehicles entering the vicinity.
- Increased levels of security supervision.
- Pre-opening sweep of the arenas.
- Deployment of explosive detection dogs where appropriate.
- Increased vehicle searches.
- Staff briefings
- Actively monitoring CCTV.

In house expertise and reliance on CTSA

To the best of my knowledge, most venues did not have an in house security expert to assess counter terrorism and security measures. They used in house to liaise with their local CTSA for specialised counter terrorism advice before May 2017. The focus using internal and CTSA expertise has continued since May 2017.

Walk through metal detectors (WTMD's)

To the best of my knowledge, it was not common practice for Arenas to deploy WTMD's for every event prior to May 2017, with the 02 London and Wembley Arena only having them in place for all

events however, they could be deployed at other venues based on events assessed as high risk due to the nature of the event, eg, boxing, or because of a specific threat as notified by CTSA. The use of WTMD's has increased at some Arenas in the UK since May 2017 with venues such as Manchester Arena, First Direct Arena Leeds, Utilita Arena Newcastle, Resorts World Arena Birmingham and Utilita Arena Birmingham now using them as standard equipment for the all customers visiting these facilities.

Extended Perimeters

To my knowledge, it was not common practice for venues to have extended perimeters for searching visitors before May 2017 Operationally Sensitive.

Seminars

In April 2016, the National Arenas Association supported the European Arenas Association in staging a Security Seminar, in Birmingham. The conference attracted operational and security managers from many National Arenas Association venues and included representatives from national security providers and the West Midlands Counter Terrorism unit. The day provided an insight into security advancements and what arenas should be doing to safeguard against security breaches and counter terrorism.

E3S is organised by the International Live Music Conference (ILMC) in close collaboration with the National Arena Association, European Arena Association and other leading theatre and venue organisations and live event security companies. Launched in 2017, E3S is an international platform dedicated to safety and security in the live events industry. The conference brings together leading venues; festivals; touring and sport professionals; and security experts from around the world. E3S is a one-day event that aims to develop best practice and harmonise standards across the industry, while encouraging all delegates to share information and introduce initiatives that will benefit all. Alongside a full schedule of panel and roundtable discussions, security experts and service providers present the latest concepts and tools related to security at live events. The most recent conference included sessions including a table top exercise on Protective Security Considerations at Events, examining how event organisers can conduct vulnerability assessments and, from this, identify protective security options, human behaviour research on risks to mass gatherings and crowded spaces change and a session led by Sportpaleis Antwerp, who conducted a major simulation of a terrorist attack, involving a presentation of the key outcomes and recommendations learned from the exercise.

Training

The National Arenas Association hold Event Managers Symposiums regularly. Most NAA venues send Event Management representatives to the symposiums. Security arrangements are discussed at meetings and a terrorism incident table top exercise was held at one of the symposiums in Birmingham following the incident at Manchester Arena.

The National Arenas Association organised training courses for its members, generally focused on operational, event and crisis management modules. A new module, Terrorism & Major Emergencies has been introduced to the curriculum for 2020. The staging of the course has been delayed due to COVID however, the outline of the module for Terrorism and Major Emergencies is a classroom-based programme delivered through scenario-based immersive learning activities, where participants are required to assume a range of roles within an Event Management or Incident Command Team focusing on complex individual and collaborative decisions. By adopting experiential and activity-based learning methods, this course seeks to integrate and focus theory and practice.